

# American Studies at Swedish universities 1969

In April 1969 a questionnaire was distributed to fifty university departments, ten to each of the five universities in Gothenburg, Lund, Stockholm, Umeå och Uppsala. The intention was to try to determine how and to what extent studies and research on the US is done at the university level. The report was presented at an American Studies conference in Ditchley Park, England, at the end of April.

The university subjects chosen were those which traditionally are considered to belong to American Studies, that is to say literature, history and a number of close subjects within behavioural science, political science and economics. By experience we know that there is a great interest in American society and the university system within these subjects. The selection could, however, be discussed. In ethnogeography, for example, research has been done.

The frequency of answers was surprisingly high, 94 per cent. The distribution was the following:

English	5	( 5)
Economics, business administration	9	(10)
Sociology, pedagogy, psychology	15	(15)
Political science, geography, economic history, history	18	(20)
Total	47	(50)

The number of answers makes it possible for us to draw fairly realistic conclusions about the range of American Studies in the ten subjects mentioned. It should be stressed, however, that it has been difficult to receive appropriate statistics for some items. Some of the questions proved not to be sufficiently specified, which made it

impossible to work them up. Of course it has not been possible to go into a detailed account of the contents of the studies and the research.

### *Organization*

Since we do not have special American Studies programs in Sweden (see *American Studies in Scandinavia* No 1, p. 19) we also lack a special organization for this type of studies. Quite naturally the increased interest in American literature has had as a consequence that special sections have been established at three of the five English university departments. But this has all happened fairly late and one should rather point out the fact that two of the universities do still not have American sections (Stockholm and Umeå).

Uppsala university is the only one that has a professor of American literature. The professorship was founded on the initiative of American Council of Learned Societies. It has been on the Swedish budget since 1968. The American Institute was established in 1947 but in the beginning it had no special position of American literature.

At the history department in Uppsala organized research is done on American society (the research project "Sweden and America after 1860"). There is also a special section of American history with a lecturer in American history. As can be read in the following paragraphs quite a few university departments carry on teaching and research on American topics, though less organized.

Four out of the five English university departments have special libraries of American literature. The section of American history in Uppsala has also such a special library, but none of the subjects within political sciences, behavioural science and economics. There are two subsections among them, though. Within these fields a great number of the books are American, but there has been no reason for systematizing the books on separate countries.

### *Teaching*

Four English departments have special courses on American literature. A great number of students have attended them; during the last year 2,755 in all. There are also special lectures on the licentiate level with 30 students. Within economics and business administration

there have been no special courses on American topics. But one can assume that the students will get information on the US from their readings.

This does also on the whole go for behavioural science. But three of these departments have special courses. When a Fulbright professor of sociology lectured in Uppsala 25 students in the 3-betyg and licentiate levels attended these lectures. The department of pedagogy in Uppsala has similar teaching on the 1-betyg and 2-betyg levels with 600 students. In Umeå pedagogy has paid great attention to the US in a course on historic comparative pedagogy with 120 students. The rest of the departments of pedagogy have also shown a great interest in American teaching and pedagogy. There have been lectures on these topics on all levels.

Half of the departments of social science and history (9) have had special courses or lectures on American topics. But this teaching is unevenly distributed between and within the subjects. There are also differences among the universities. Political science has no special teaching in the mentioned field while six of the departments of history and economic history and two of the geography departments have such teaching.

When like in most cases the teaching has got the form of sub-courses all students have to attend them. The special courses have not been obligatory and as a rule the teaching has been organized in groups and the number of students in each group has been small. There have been special courses in history (Lund, Uppsala, Umeå), geography (Umeå) and economic history (mainly on Latin America — in Uppsala).

However, as many as 100 students attended the special courses in geography in Umeå. A completely separate alternative has been presented in American history in Uppsala.

Within economic history, political science and geography there has been some teaching on American topics without being organized as special courses. As far as geography is concerned this is self-evident; both North America and South America are dealt with in most parts of the teaching. Political science takes up the US in the section "Foreign governments and constitutions" and economic history in connection with the survey on economic development of foreign countries. The university of Umeå has the largest number of depart-

ments with "An American Profile" within the field of political science, geography, history and economic history.

### *Research*

It is above all two fields of study, English and social science, that have had more extensive research. Three of the English departments (Lund, Gothenburg, Uppsala) have done research on American language and literature with 60 3-betyg students and 7 scholars on the licentiate level. At the American Institute in Uppsala there have been seminars on the licentiate level during the last year.

As many as 12 out of the 18 departments in social science carry on some kind of research. 8 of them belong to history and economic history. In this context could be mentioned the research project "Sweden and America after 1860" at the department of history in Uppsala. The project includes about 15 students and 9 scholars on the postgraduate level who are doing research on the US emigration. Besides this project one could mention political science in Lund. 20 students and 2 licentiate scholars investigate the rôle of the military in the decision process of American politics. In all 55 students and 24 scholars are registered within this block. 5 out of the latter group are teachers.

With the exception of the department of economics in Lund that has had an extensive research program on American economic theory, behavioural science and economics have few people doing research in these fields. About 30 students and 20 licentiate scholars have been engaged in this program. But it must again be emphasized that the limit between this kind of investigations and a great part of methodological research within for example sociology, pedagogy and business administration is not clear. However, it seems justified to draw the conclusion that among the young generation of scholars there is no coming Gunnar Myrdal.

### *Contacts with the US*

Hardly any other country has contributed so much to the direct contacts with Swedish university departments within the subject fields mentioned as the US. One exception is of course England and English as a subject. The table below shows that on the average a little more than three teachers at each English department have been to the US during the last three years.

## *Studies, research and teaching in the US 1966—1969*

<i>Subject</i>		<i>Young scholars</i>	<i>Teachers</i>
English	( 5)*	12 ( 171)*	17
Social science, history	(18)	27 ( 481)	14
Behavioural	(15)	33 (2284)	28
Economics	( 9)	33 ( 239)	19
Total	(47)	85 (3175)	78

\*) The figures within parentheses in the first column state the total number of departments and the second the total number of licentiate scholars.

For economics and behavioural science the figure is two. It has not been possible to relate the number of teachers who have visited the US with the whole number of teachers since there has been a lack of information or contradictory information. But one can be convinced that the proportion is much larger than that for younger scholars. In this context behavioural science and economics come better off than in American studies. The many young scholars of the social and behavioural sciences who have visited American universities must be related to the total research volume which, especially within behavioural science, is very large.

### *Summary*

It is evident that there has been an increasing interest in the US lately. In spite of the fact that this survey has registered quite a lot of research and teaching which has been directed towards American society and despite the fact that our contacts with American universities are many, one must raise the question if Swedish universities to a sufficient extent do their task to inform us about the US.

To a specially high degree this concerns areas like behavioural science and economics where the influence from the US on the whole is very strong. The English departments show, however, an increasing interest expressed in more organized teaching and research on American literature and language. Still we are fairly far-off from a reasonable balance between English and American language and culture.